

# Professional Ethics

## Policy Statement

The American Association of University Professors recognizes that membership in the academic profession carries with it special responsibility. The *Statement on Professional Ethics* that follows sets forth general standards assumed by members of the profession.

Professors, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it. To this end, professors devote their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence. They accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They practice intellectual honesty. Although professors may follow subsidiary interests, these interests must never seriously hamper or compromise their freedom of inquiry.

As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to assure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom.

As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas, professors show due respect for the opinions of others. Professors acknowledge academic debt and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Professors accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution.

As members of an academic institution, professors seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars. Although professors observe the stated regulations of the institution, provided the regulations do not contravene academic freedom, they maintain their right to criticize and seek revision. Professors give due regard to their paramount responsibilities within their institution in determining the amount and character of work done outside it. When considering the interruption or termination of their service, professors recognize the effect of their decision upon the program of the institution and give due notice of their intentions.

As members of their community, professors have the rights and obligations of other citizens. Professors measure the urgency of these obligations in the light of their responsibilities to their subject, to their students, to their profession, and to their institution. When they speak or act as private persons, they avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for their college or university. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, professors have a particular

obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom.

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### **Related Policies**

Academic Freedom  
Political Activity of Faculty  
The Teaching Responsibility

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### **History of Policy– Professional Ethics**

07/01/89 – Reaffirmed with publication of Faculty Manual 2.8.2  
07/01/91 – Reaffirmed with publication of Faculty Manual 2.8.3  
07/01/93 – Reaffirmed with publication of Faculty Manual 2.8.3  
07/01/95 – Reaffirmed with publication of Faculty Manual 2.8.3  
07/01/98 – Reaffirmed with publication of Faculty Manual 2.8.3  
07/01/00 – Reaffirmed with publication of Faculty Manual 2.8.3  
07/01/02 – Reaffirmed with publication of Faculty Manual 2.8.3  
07/01/03 – Reaffirmed with publication of Faculty Handbook 2.8.3

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MARYWOOD UNIVERSITY  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL